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Minister Announces Schedule for 2008 Labrador Marine Coastal Service

The Provincial Government continues to improve the Labrador Marine Coastal Service.

Today, the Honourable Dianne Whalen, Minister of Transportation and Works, released the 2008 Labrador Marine Coastal Service schedule, which includes an enhanced service for users of the *Sir Robert Bond* and the *Astron*.

"This government is committed to finding ways to provide a better and more efficient service for those who rely on our Labrador ferries," said Minister Whalen. "This year's schedule is indicative of these efforts."

Some of the highlights of the new schedule include:

- The Sir Robert Bond will commence service on June 6 and end in late November, pending freight demand. Effective September 26 until October 13, departures from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Lewisporte, via Cartwright, will be changed from Sundays to Tuesdays, to accommodate a freight trip from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Cartwright and return, pending freight demand;
- The *Astron's* schedule will start on June 9 and end on November 21, pending ice and weather conditions. The pilot project launched in 2007, which added Lewisporte and Happy Valley-Goose Bay to the *Astron's* ports of call, and provided better service to North Coast communities, will be continued;
- The *Northern Ranger* service will commence on June 9 and end on November 17, pending ice and weather conditions;
- The *Apollo* schedule starts on April 14 and ends on January 11, 2009, pending ice and weather conditions;
- The *Challenge One* service will commence on June 9 and end on November 30, pending ice and weather conditions.

The Honourable John Hickey, Minister of Labrador Affairs, said: "These new enhancements are improving the flow of goods, services and people throughout the region and between Labrador and the island, providing Labradorians with a stronger sense of connection with the rest of the province. We continue to make significant improvements to the transportation network for Labrador, highlighted with our announcement we will invest $45 million this summer for Phase I of the Trans Labrador Highway."

The Honourable Patty Pottle, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, was particularly pleased with changes to the schedule of the *Astron*. "The expansion of the *Astron* schedule that services the North Coast of Labrador will further improve the availability of goods and products to the communities that rely heavily on the service," said Minister Pottle.

A copy of the provincial ferry schedules is available at: www.gov.nl.ca/tw/ferryservices/schedules.stm

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